



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
WISCONSIN

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February 1, 2017

Chancellor Rebecca Blank
161 Bascom Hall
500 Lincoln Drive
Madison, WI 53706
Also via email

Dear Chancellor Blank,

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has long believed that an ex-offender should have full restoration of civil rights. We have steadfastly monitored and challenged any proposed encroachment of this standard in all facets of public policy. For example, we have consistently advocated that employers should not be allowed to consider criminal records in hiring unless the offense is related to the work the person would be doing if hired.

We believe the same principle should apply to University of Wisconsin student admissions. The UW System does not, and has not, asked student applicants for information on criminal records. That is appropriate, given that the university is a leading teaching and research institution with an international reputation for excellence, which serves all residents of the state. This policy has served us well.

For these reasons we feel it necessary to express our concern about a possible change in policy regarding inclusion of a student applicant's criminal record information. Who is going to make a judgment on acceptability? How far back does an offense trigger such review? How great is the danger of civil rights abuse in making these judgments? Would this information be used as an excuse for application denial as is so often the case in employment? Is this type of information appropriate for the stated mission of the University of Wisconsin?

We understand the heavy responsibility on the University administration in providing its students outstanding educational opportunities. In that effort, we hope the criminal records proposal will be carefully considered and rejected.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrea Kaminski".

Andrea Kaminski
Executive Director